The Southern PATRIOT

Vol. 12. No. 3 Published by the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc. March, 1954

Kentucky School Drive Brightens South

Although a bill in the Kentucky legislature to end segregation in education failed to pass, the support mustered for it gave promise of better things to come for Kentucky and the South.

From all sections of Kentucky, from all walks of life, young and old, Negro and white assembled to testify for an end to segregation in state schools.

Public hearing on Senate Bill 6 to provide for integration in public schools was scheduled in Frankfort, the state capital, on February 24. (This bill was discussed in detail in February's Patriot.)

That morning, supporters of the bill assembled, appropriately, beneath the statue of Governor William Goebel, a great reformer and defender of people's rights of the past. All were given streamers proclaiming "Democratic Schools."

Student delegations were there from Berea, the University of Kentucky, College of the Bible, Eastern Kentucky State College . . . Ministers of all faiths were there: the secretary of the Jefferson County Sunday School Association in Louisville, a Negro pastor from Madisonville, a rabbi from Lexington . . . Labor leaders were there: the secretary-treasurer of the state C.I.O. council, a representative from the Kentucky State Federation of Labor . . . And just plain citizens of good will.

The hearing was held before a joint senate and house committee. The galleries were full and standees lined the walls of the chamber. The chairman, viewing the crowd, commented that it was Brotherhood Week and "somebody must have done a good job of public relations."

Twenty-one witnesses appeared to testify for the bill. Because of limited time only 10 were heard. They stressed the moral, psychological and economic evils of segregation and urged the immediate ending of racial bars in education.

No one appeared to testify against the bill.

Students from Berea and Eastern State College arrived bearing great stacks of petitions and letters urging passage of

(Continued on Page 4.)

FLASH! Aubrey Williams has been summoned to appear before the Jenner Committee in a hearing at New Orleans, March 16.

—Courtesy Louisville Courier-Journal

Dr. M. M. D. Perdue addresses the joint hearing on Senate Bill 6 before the Constitutional Amendment Committees of the Kentucky House and Senate. Dr. Perdue is pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Louisville; chairman of the Militant Church Movement, and chairman of the Citizens Committee for Democratic Schools in Kentucky.

A FIRM REBUTTAL OF A STUPID SMEAR

What can be uglier than an irresponsible epithet draped with the vestments of authority? Is the exercise of reason to be curbed by the parrot-cry of "Treason" and the weasel-word "Subversion"?

It is with great reluctance that we devote space and energy to refutation of grave charges made with characteristic glibness and lack of foundation by Senator William Jenner, a Republican from Indiana. For who can minister to the mind diseased?

Jenner is chairman of the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on internal security. An Associated Press dispatch from Washington on Jan. 28 read as follows:

> Jenner said in a statement his subcommittee has "learned a good deal about the methods the (Communist) conspirators used to go to the very top of the United States government, but we have not learned who all of them are."
>
> Nor, he said, has the subcommittee found out all they did "to betray our country to the Soviet despotism."
>
> Jenner said the subcommittee will continue its probing in that field and also plans, among other things, "to pursue a study into the subject of subversive influences in Latin America as they may affect our national security."
>
> The subcommittee included in a brief report the investigations it now has under way.
>
> **Mostly these involved probes for Communist influences in various labor unions, but it also included "Communist activities of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc."; "Communist activities in the Federal Shorthand Reporters Assn., New York City," and "Communist infiltration of United States consulates and embassies."**

In this context, clearly by design, the Senator meant to impute disloyalty and subversion to the SCEF, and to subject it to the contumely those crimes deserve.

This outrageous libel was challenged immediately by Mr. Aubrey Williams, president of the Fund. He sent a message to Jenner, daring him to submit such charges to a grand jury or to risk a damage suit by repeating them without senatorial immunity. Williams declared:

> I do not believe that you will dare take either of the two courses for you also know full well that the only activity in which the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., has been engaged in has been its fight for the aboli-

(Continued on Page 2.)

LET US LOOK AT THE RECORD...

(Continued from Page 1.)

tion of discriminations against American citizens because of race or color or creed, the ending of segregation in schools and colleges, the opening of hospitals to Negroes, and the doing away with all forms of inequality.

You may regard this as un-American, but it is unthinkable that any American jury will agree with you.

At a meeting of the board in Atlanta, on Feb. 7, the directors of the SCEF expressed their eager willingness that the Fund's objectives and activities be made as widely known as possible. They said:

The substitution of smear tactics for the discussion of the activities of the Fund is an admission in itself of the unassailable rightness of our activities. To treat them as **prima facie** evidence of "Communist activities" gives undue credit to the advocates of Communism. Their advocacy by the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., grows out of commitment to the soundest democratic and American ideals. They are no more subversive than the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution, nor than those Amendments to the Constitution abolishing the institution of slavery and extending the franchise to American women.

Both Mr. Williams and the board emphasized that neither they nor any SCEF employee had been approached by Jenner or any of his emissaries before the senator made his report, which the **Afro-American** of Feb. 20 called as false as his "shocking assertion that General George C. Marshall is the biggest traitor in American history."

It is quite likely that Jenner is completely ignorant of the SCEF's activities. Racial and religious tolerance has not been conspicuous among his interests. Therefore, for his possible edification we wish to present a chronological list of SCEF projects. These projects are cited with pride in the spirit in which they were conceived and executed, and with humility that recognizes their limited accomplishment.

1947

As part of a campaign to end discrimination in public schools, published and distributed 125,000 copies of a graphic presentation of "Segregation in Education."

1948

Coordinated a Conference at the University of Virginia and the adoption at Monticello, home of Thomas Jefferson, of a "Declaration of Civil Rights" signed by 200 outstanding Southerners, Negro and white. Twenty-five thousand copies of the "Declaration" were published.

1949

Conducted a poll of 15,000 college and university teachers in Southern states on their attitudes toward segregation in higher education.

Began a campaign to open public libraries to Negroes.

Submitted an AMICUS CURIAE brief to the U. S. Supreme Court in the SWEATT case testing the constitutionality of segregation in the University of Texas Law School. The brief was signed by 18 lawyers from the 13 Southern states.

1950

Initiated a conference on Discrimination in Higher Education at Atlanta University sponsored by 225 leaders from 116 Southern colleges and universities.

Published a 90-page pamphlet "Discrimination in Higher Education."

Sponsored a pilgrimage to Charleston, S. C. to honor Judge and Mrs. J. Waties Waring.

Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt were the honored guests at a reception in honor of Mrs. Pandit given by the SCEF at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

1951

Sponsored a 12-panel photographic exhibit "Children in America" by Marion Palfi, shown for 12 months in leading universities and public libraries in almost all Southern states.

Testified before a committee of the Association of American Law Schools in Washington, in support of a proposal by the Yale Law School to require abolition of segregation by member schools as a condition of membership in the Association.

Launched a campaign to open hospitals to Negro patients and doctors and to eliminate racial bars in profesional societies.

Coordinated a joint protest by ministers and others to the Governor of Florida in the tragic dynamiting of the home of Harry Moore, beloved Negro leader.

1952

Conducted a contest for the best editorial on segregation in education appearing in a college newspaper.

The President of the SCEF appeared before the platform committee of the Democratic Party at its Chicago convention, and advocated an uncompromising civil rights plank.

Published 25,000 copies of "The Untouchables, the Meaning of Segregation in Hospitals," written by Alfred Maund with design and illustrations contributed by Ben Shahn.

Polled 2,414 hospital administrators and 42,500 white doctors in 17 Southern and border states on their attitudes toward racial segregation practices in hospitals and the exclusion of Negro doctors from county and State Medical Societies.

Coordinated a southwide conference at Columbia, S. C. on "Youth and Racial Unity through Equality of Educational Opportunity," sponsored by 500 representative Southerners, white and Negro, including professors from 150 Southern colleges and universities.

1953

Conducted a study of race relations in the typical border state of West Virginia.

Supported a bill in the Missouri State Legislature to end segregation in public schools.

Set up a Medical Advisory Committee to guide and evaluate the efforts of the Fund to end segregation and discrimination in medical care.

Text of Williams' Telegram to Jenner

William E. Jenner
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

In a recent Associated Press dispatch you are quoted as saying that investigations being carried on by your committee include a probe into the "Communist activities of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc." Your charge, thinly disguised as a mere statement of a routine investigative activity, is as dishonest as it is contemptible. You well know that in the prevalent state of fear and hysteria the words you use stand for subversion and disloyalty to the United States. Any investigation that may have been made by your committee or its staff has been **ex parte** and has not included an interview with me as president nor any person responsible for the activi-

(Continued on Page 4.)

Statement Issued By SCEF Board

At a called meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., on February 7 in Atlanta, Ga., the following members being present: Dr. Albert E. Barnett, Atlanta; Dr. James P. Brawley, Atlanta; Mr. John Wesley Dobbs, Atlanta; Dr. James A. Dombrowski, New Orleans; Mr. Charles G. Gomillion, Tuskegee, Ala.; Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, Atlanta; Dr. William Obrinsky, New Orleans; Dr. Howard L. Parsons, Knoxville, Tenn.; Mrs. Andrew W. Simkins, Columbia, S. C.; Mr. Aubrey Williams, Montgomery, Ala., the following statement was approved for publication:

An Associated Press dispatch of January 28th, with a Washington, D. C. dateline, reports a statement by Senator Jenner to the effect that his sub-committee on internal security is including among its investigations an inquiry into "Communist activites of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc."

The nature of the investigation underlying this statement is difficult to understand since no approach has been made to the officers or employed staff of the

(Continued on Page 4.)

The President of the Fund, Mr. Aubrey Williams, appeared with Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia in "The Big Issue," a nation-wide TV debate on "Segregation in the Public Schools."

A kinescope of the Williams-Talmadge debate was made available by the Fund, without charge, to educational and civic groups throughout the South. It has been heard in major cities and leading colleges and universities in South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Fund Official Testifies for Federal FEPC Act

Senate Labor subcommittee hearings on Senate Bill 692, the Federal Equality of Opportunity of Employment Act, began last month. Among the witnesses testifying in favor of the bill was Mr. John Bolt Culbertson, vice-president of the SCEF.

The bill would prohibit racial or religious discrimination in hiring and provides for a commission with legal powers to check discrimination.

The testimony Mr. Culbertson gave in behalf of the Fund is as follows:

The Southern Conference Educational Fund wishes to take this opportunity to emphasize the need for the compulsory fair-employment-practices provisions embodied in Senate Bill 692. The Fund is a Southern organization; its directors and supporters are men and women, white and Negro, who live in the South. Therefore, the Fund's stand is taken with full cognizance that the bill up for consideration before this committee is opposed by several groups in the South.

We do not consider this opposition a significant factor in the issues involved. We are confident that much of this opposition would disappear once a law were enacted and its intentons and benefits became clear.

Perhaps it would be cogent here to emphasize that the temper of today's South is a more complex and reasonable thing than the naive upholders of so-called "tradition" would admit. Striking proof of this new maturity can be seen in the region's acceptance of court decisions that ended restrictions on Negro voters, Negro students and Negro travelers. As a result of these judicial edicts, the numbers of Negro voters have doubled, trebled, and even quadrupled in the Southern states. Negroes have campaigned for public offices and have won them. Negro college students have been received on the campus without question—and in many cases with pride—by their young white colleagues. In railroad coaches and diners, white and Negro ride and eat, side by side. All of this has come to pass within the last decade.

Behind such manifestations of mutual acceptance by white and Negro lies a growing regional awareness of a simple, but profound truism:. The South's greatest natural resource is its people, ALL of its people. To decree that the black one-third of the population must be the menial servants of the white majority; to divide the black and white into separate, walled-off communities — both of these arrangements are sheer folly. Both of these arrangements have been tried in the South and have demonstrated their folly in bitter, tragic terms.

In World War II approximately three-quarters of the draft registrants rejected for educational and mental deficiencies came from the Southeastern and Southwestern states. That high ratio of rejection for both physical and mental reasons continues to the present, reflecting educational and living standards that lag behind the rest of the nation. The U. S. Department of Commerce estimated the average per capita income in this country at $1,639 in 1952. But none of the Southern states reached this level; their averages ranged from $818 in Mississippi to $1,452 in Texas. Bureau of Labor Statistics figures for September, 1952 showed that Southern sawmill worker averaged $1.02 an hour while their counterparts in the Western states were getting $2.15. Mississippi manufacturing workers averaged $1.10 an hour in this same period; those in Michigan $2.04. A U. S. Department of Agriculutre official stated in January of this year that two-fifths of the farmers in the South earn less than $2,000. All of these disabilities are, directly and indirectly, the heritage of racial discrimination. . .

A Federal Equality of Opportunity in Employment law would do much to lessen interracial tension and, correspondingly, would greatly increase the self-confidence and the earnings of Southern workers. It would speed the orderly entry of the Negro into industrial and white-collar fields. It would make clear that "block"-hiring—either of whites or Negroes—would not be tolerated by society. It would permit workers to abandon racial anxieties and focus on legitimate concerns.

But overriding and pervading the specific attitudes and problems of workers and employers are two broad aspects of the Southern scene: (1) Agriculture will offer means of livelihood to fewer Southerners with every succeeding year. (2) Regional prosperity will depend upon diversification of industrial output, especially in finished goods, and an expanded local market that can consume those goods.

If the people of the South were going to remain an agricultural people, the need for legislation against discrimination in employment might be considered moot. But modern mechanized farming is transforming the economy. The field hand and sharecropper are being replaced by automatic, tractor-powered devices; the small dirt farmers' holdings are being consolidated into giant, corporation enterprises. A study of 1950 census figures reveals that in five Southern states—South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Gergia and Louisiana—1.8 per cent of the farmers owned 16.9 per cent of the farm land. They accounted for 27 per cent of all farm products sold and 37.1 per cent of the livestock products sold. This concentration is forcing rural people to migrate to urban areas in search of employment, and chief among these migrants is the Negro. According to the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee publication on "Employment and Economic Status of Negroes" only 19.2 per cent of the country's Negro male population was engaged in agricultural work—including forestry and fishery—in 1952, as opposed to 43.3 per cent in 1940. According to the same report, 60 per cent of the nonwhite population resided in urban areas in 1950, as opposed to 47.9 per cent in 1940. But how can the Negro make a decent living in his new environs if the taboos of the plantation era are allowed to abridge his job opportunities?

Industrial development in the South has greatly increased in recent years, and the emphasis has been on the production of finished goods rather than on the processing of raw materials to be finished elsewhere. Clothing, hosiery, electrical appliances, automobiles, canned and frozen foods, and furniture are now important Southern products. The best natural market for these consumer goods is in the region itself. But as long as the median income of Negro families stands at about half that of whites, this market will be severely limited. In the economy of the modern South "cheap" labor is no longer an advantage but a positive detriment. Exclusion and exploitation of Negro workers have been the chief means of making labor "cheap". The earnings and prosperity of all Southerners now depend on a reversal of this policy. . .

In conclusion, let it be emphasized that the Southern Conference Educational Fund feels that only a law with mandatory provisions such as those incorporated in the bill before this committee will have appreciable beneficial effect on human relations in the South. The Old Order buttressed itself in the South by means of all-inculsive segregation statutes. Fortunately, these statutes are wilting before the scrutiny of the courts. But unfortunately, no clear assertion of public policy has replaced them, and there is some uncertainty and lack of direction. A Federal Equality of Opportunity in Employment law would formulate explicitly the course our democracy is taking and would bolster those millions of people who want to make democracy a way of life.